

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS ESTC VE CU US

SUBJECT: COMMERCE BY VENEZUELAN CARRIERS TO AND FROM CUBA:
POSSIBLE SANCTIONS UNDER FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF
1961

REF: STATE 244448

1. APPRECIATE INFORMATION SET OUT REFTEL RECEIVED TODAY,
WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE HELPFUL HAD I UNDERSTOOD EARLIER
ON FULL MEANING OF PARA 1.C.
2. AS I HAD ANTICIPATED (PARA 8 CARACAS 10547), I SAT NEXT
TO CALVANI AT LUNCH TODAY AND HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
THIS PROBLEM FURTHER.
3. IT WAS CLEAR (PARA 3 CARACAS 10266) THAT VENEZUELAN
FOREIGN MINISTER NOT ONLY HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN INFORMED OF
INTENDED DEPARTURE OF T-19 FOR CUBA TO LOAD SUGAR BUT HE
HAD NOT REPEAT NOT KNOWN THAT TRANSPORT BY A VENEZUELAN FLAG
VESSEL MIGHT INVOKE THE SANCTIONS FORESEEN IN OUR FAA OF
1961. CALVANI SAID EXPLICITLY THAT SO FAR AS HE KNEW,
IDEA OF SENDING A VENEZUELAN NAVAL TRANSPORT TO LIFT THE
SUGAR WAS DUE TO TWO FACTORS: ONE, THE THEN-COMPREHENDED
NECESSITY FOR BRINGING IN SUGAR QUICKLY; AND TWO, A SUGGESTION
APPARENTLY BY THE VENEZUELAN NAVAL STAFF THAT THIS COULD BE
DONE WITH LESS PUBLICITY AND AT LOWER COST THAN BY HAVING
RESORT TO COMMERCIAL SHIPMENTS. SO FAR AS CALVANI WAS CON-
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CERNED, HE HAD NOT EVEN HEEARD OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE T-19
TO CUBA UNTIL I APPRISED HIM OF IT, AS REPORTED CARACAS 10266.
IT HAS SUBSEQUENTLY DEVELOPED (PARA TWO CARACAS 10361)
THAT THE SUPPOSED INSTANT NEED OF SUGAR WAS BASED ON ERRONEOUS

INFORMATION. HOWEVER, THE SHIP HAD SAILED AND RETURNED, AND CALVANI FERVENTLY HOPED THAT SOME SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEM COULD BE FOUND. HE PLEDGED HIS FULL COOPERATION IN FINDING SUCH A SOLUTION.

4. I SAID THAT ON THE BASIS OF OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS AND OUR PRESENT TALK, IT SEEMED ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD KNOWN NOTHING ABOUT THIS PEISODE AND THAT OTHERS WERE ALSO IN IGNORANCE AS TO A POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH SANCTIONS POSSIBLY TO BE IMPOSED PURSUANT TO OUR DOMESTIC LEGISLATION. I SAID ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM RELATED TO THE FUTURE--WOULD THERE BE ASSURANCES THAT APPROPRIATE STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN BY GOV TO PREVENT FUTURE RECURRENCE?

5. HERE CALVANI SAID IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT HE HAD ONLY YESTERDAY GONE OVER A LIST OF VARIOUS FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS WITH PRESIDENT CALDERA AND THAT PRESIDENT HAD NOT ONLY REAFFIRMED HIS PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT NO INTENTION TO RECOGNIZE CUBA (CARACAS 10734) BUT HAD ALSO TOLD HIM THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REPEAT NO INITIATIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY UNTIL THE NEXT VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT TAKES OFFICE. AS TO MY SPECIFIC QUESTION IF THERE COULD BE EVEN A THOUGHT OF A RECURRENCE OF THE EPISODE OF THE T-19, THE FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE ME A MOST CATEGORIC "NO."

6. COMMENTING ON CALVANI'S REFERENCE TO PRESIDENT CALDERA'S INSTRUCTIONS, I SAID IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF WHEN THE NEW SHADOW CABINET IS FORMED, CALVANI OR OTHERS MIGHT DRAW ATTENTION OF INCOMING FOREIGN MINISTER TO POSSIBLE FUTURE DIFFICULTIES THROUGH EVEN INADVERTENT COLLISION WITH OUR STATUTE IF ANY VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD TRANSPORT MATERIALS, COMMODITIES OR OTHER CARGO TO OR FROM CUBA.

7. FROM SOURCES CLOSE TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WE LEARN THAT AT LONG LAST FULL IMPACT OF CONSEQUENCES WHICH MIGHT RESULT FROM AN INADVERTENT CONFLICT WITH PROVISIONS OF OUR FAA OF 1961
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IS BEGINNING TO PERMEATE THE MINISTRY WITH CONSEQUENT EXPRESSIONS OF DISMAY AND REAL FEAR THAT BY ACCIDENT VENEZUELA MAY HAVE SET IN TRAIN A CHAIN OF EVENTS WHICH WOULD DEPRIVE IT OF MUCH VALUED MAP PROGRAM.

8. FROM THIS CONVERSATION WITH CALVANI I DRAW TWO CLEAR CONCLUSIONS:

A. PRESIDENT CALDERA, IN SENDING NAVAL TRANSPORT TO LIFT SUGAR FROM CUBA WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF HIS FOREIGN MINISTER APPARENTLY ACTED WITHOUT THOUGHT TO POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES (IF KNOWN) OF SANCTIONS OF OUR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961;
AND

B. THERE WILL BE NO REPEAT NO RECURRENCE OF THE EPISODE
AND APPROPRIATE STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO PREVENT FUTURE
RECURRENCE. I WOULD PROPOSE, IF DEPT AGREES, AT AN APPROPRIATE
MOMENT TO INFORM MINISTERS OF NEXT GOVERNMENT OF THE ROCKS
AND SHOALS IN CUBAN WATERS.

9. RE PARA TWO REFTTEL, CARACAS TELS 10697 AND 10730 ARE
RESPONSIVE.
MCCLINTOCK

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